



Florida Agricultural Statistics Service  
1222 Woodward Street  
Orlando, Florida 32803  
407 / 648-6013  
<http://www.nass.usda.gov/fl>



# FARM LABOR

August 2004

## FLORIDA

The number of workers paid by farmers and agricultural services totaled 42,000 for the week of July 11 through 17. Farmers hired 39,000 workers compared with 57,000 in April and 45,000 in July 2003. Agricultural services provided 3,000 paid workers, down 6,000 from last quarter but equal to the number hired a year ago.

Most fieldwork was on schedule despite the abundant showers during the survey week. Muddy fields in some Panhandle and northern Peninsula localities prevented entry of heavy equipment which slowed fieldwork. Drier weather over the central and southern Peninsula areas allowed vegetable harvesting and preparation of fields for fall crop vegetable planting to proceed at a normal pace. Picking of corn and tobacco harvesting remained active in northern

Peninsula and Panhandle localities. There was no citrus shipped. Only fresh squeeze plants were open. Caretakers applied mid summer sprays to crops designated for fresh use as the rainfall permitted. Citrus operators fertilized, hedged and weeded groves, and reset trees as needed.

The July all hired worker wage rate averaged \$9.64 per hour, up 79 cents or nearly nine percent from the April wage of \$8.85, and 11 cents or one percent higher than the \$9.53 paid last year. Last quarter, farmers paid \$8.79 per hour while agricultural services paid \$9.25. Last year, farmers paid \$9.55 per hour and agricultural services paid \$9.25.

## UNITED STATES

There were 1,293,000 hired workers on the Nation's farms and ranches during the week of July 11-17, 2004, up 2 percent from a year ago. Of these hired workers, 953,000 workers were hired directly by farm operators. Agricultural service employees on farms and ranches made up the remaining 340,000 workers.

Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage of \$9.10 per hour during the July 2004 reference week, up 22 cents from a year earlier. Field workers received an average of \$8.42 per hour, up 25 cents from last July, while livestock workers earned \$8.75 per hour compared with \$8.57 a year earlier. The field and livestock worker combined wage rate, at \$8.50 per hour, was up 24 cents from last year.

The number of hours worked averaged 39.3 hours for hired workers during the survey week, down 1 percent from a year ago.

The largest increases in the number of hired farm workers from last year occurred in the Southeast (Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina), Northeast II (Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey and Pennsylvania), Lake (Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin), Southern Plains (Oklahoma and Texas), Mountain III (Arizona and New Mexico), and Delta (Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi) regions. Despite moderate rains in the Southeast region, peach harvest remained in full swing. Peach production was expected to be much higher than last year in Alabama and South Carolina, thus increasing the requirement for field workers. In the Northeast II region, continued expansion in the beef, dairy and greenhouse industries caused increased demand for hired workers. Warm weather in the Lake region accelerated vegetable development which necessitated more field workers to keep up with the harvest. In the Southern Plains and Mountain III regions, irrigation of cropland increased and supplemental feeding of livestock became active as pastures deteriorated, both of which caused more hired workers to be required. After several weeks of excessive rain in the Delta region,

the reference week was relatively dry, which led to increased field activity. Therefore, more hired workers were needed.

The largest decreases in the number of hired farm workers from a year ago were in California, Florida, the Northeast I (New England and New York), Corn Belt I (Illinois, Indiana and Ohio), and Appalachian II (Kentucky, Tennessee and West Virginia) regions. In California, worker demand was lower partially due to below normal temperatures prior to the reference week which slowed crop development. Also, some melon fields were plowed under and some stonefruit orchards were left unpicked due to low prices, both of which lessened the need for hired workers. Rain and muddy conditions halted field activities in New York, southern Indiana and much of Florida, thus reducing the demand for hired workers in the Northeast I and Corn Belt I regions and in Florida. In the Appalachian II region, above normal rainfall kept pastures green which lessened the need for supplemental feeding and reduced the demand for hired workers.

Hired farm worker wage rates were generally above a year ago in most regions. The largest increases occurred in the Mountain II (Colorado, Nevada and Utah), Southeast, Pacific (Oregon and Washington), Southern Plains, and Appalachian I (North Carolina and Virginia) regions. The higher wages in the Mountain II region were mainly due to a larger concentration of salaried workers putting in fewer hours and a higher proportion of skilled workers needed for the apricot harvest in Utah. In the Southeast region, wages were up because of a larger percentage of fruit and greenhouse workers in the work force. The higher wages in the Pacific region were because of the increased demand for skilled workers to keep up with harvest of the rapidly developing stonefruit and berry crops. In the Southern Plains region, wages were up due to continued strength in cattle prices causing a strong demand for hired workers on beef operations. Wages were higher in the Appalachian I region because of a lower proportion of part-time workers in the work force.

**TABLE 1 -- Florida agricultural workers, number of workers, wage rates, and hours worked, July 11 - 17, 2004, with comparisons**

| Employer, Year, and<br>survey week               |                 | Hired Workers       |                     |      |                                |                                |                  |      |
|--|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------|------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|------|
|  |                 | Number of workers   |                     |      | Hours<br>Worked<br>Per<br>Week | Wages Paid by Type of Work     |                  |      |
|  |                 |                     |                     |      |                                | All                            | Expected to work |      |
|  |                 | 150 days<br>or more | 149 days<br>or less |      |                                |                                |                  |      |
| HIRED BY FARMERS                                 |                 |                     |                     |      |                                |                                |                  |      |
|  |                 | Thousands           |                     |      | Hours                          | Dollars Per Hour <sup>1/</sup> |                  |      |
| 2004   |                 |                     |                     |      |                                |                                |                  |      |
|  | July 11 - 17    | 39.0                | 33.0                | 6.0  | 39.2                           | 9.63                           | 8.70             | 9.10 |
|  | April 11 - 17   | 57.0                | 53.0                | 4.0  | 38.3                           | 8.79                           | 7.85             | 8.60 |
|  | January 11-17   | 61.0                | 54.0                | 7.0  | 41.7                           | 8.85                           | 7.70             | 8.60 |
| 2003   |                 |                     |                     |      |                                |                                |                  |      |
|  | October 12 -18  | 49.0                | 43.0                | 6.0  | 39.1                           | 9.53                           | 8.55             | 7.95 |
|  | July 6 - 12     | 45.0                | 39.0                | 6.0  | 39.0                           | 9.55                           | 8.55             | 8.30 |
|  | April 6 - 12    | 53.0                | 42.0                | 11.0 | 38.3                           | 8.86                           | 8.05             | 8.10 |
|  | January 12 - 18 | 70.0                | 56.0                | 14.0 | 37.2                           | 8.81                           | 7.80             | 8.30 |
| 2002   |                 |                     |                     |      |                                |                                |                  |      |
|  | October 6 - 12  | 57.0                | 51.0                | 6.0  | 38.9                           | 8.67                           | 7.50             | 8.60 |
|  | July 7 - 13     | 43.0                | 38.0                | 5.0  | 37.5                           | 8.48                           | 7.25             | 7.80 |
| HIRED BY<br>AGRICULTURAL SERVICES                |                 |                     |                     |      |                                |                                |                  |      |
| 2004   |                 |                     |                     |      |                                |                                |                  |      |
|  | July 11 - 17    | 3.0                 |                     |      | 45.0                           | 9.70                           |                  |      |
|  | April 11 - 17   | 9.0                 |                     |      | 38.0                           | 9.25                           |                  |      |
|  | January 11 - 17 | 14.0                |                     |      | 38.5                           | 9.25                           |                  |      |
| 2003   |                 |                     |                     |      |                                |                                |                  |      |
|  | October 12 -18  | 4.0                 |                     |      | 38.0                           | 9.65                           |                  |      |
|  | July 6 - 12     | 3.0                 |                     |      | 41.0                           | 9.25                           |                  |      |
|  | April 6 - 12    | 17.0                |                     |      | 33.0                           | 9.40                           |                  |      |
|  | January 12 - 18 | 17.0                |                     |      | 32.0                           | 9.35                           |                  |      |
| 2002   |                 |                     |                     |      |                                |                                |                  |      |
|  | October 6 - 12  | 5.0                 |                     |      | 31.5                           | 9.00                           |                  |      |
|  | July 7 - 13     | 4.0                 |                     |      | 42.5                           | 9.25                           |                  |      |
| HIRED BY BOTH FARMERS &<br>AGRICULTURAL SERVICES |                 |                     |                     |      |                                |                                |                  |      |
| 2004   |                 |                     |                     |      |                                |                                |                  |      |
|  | July 11 - 17    | 42.0                |                     |      |                                | 9.64                           |                  |      |
|  | April 11 - 17   | 66.0                |                     |      |                                | 8.85                           |                  |      |
|  | January 11 - 17 | 75.0                |                     |      |                                | 8.92                           |                  |      |
| 2003   |                 |                     |                     |      |                                |                                |                  |      |
|  | October 12 -18  | 53.0                |                     |      |                                | 9.54                           |                  |      |
|  | July 6 - 12     | 48.0                |                     |      |                                | 9.53                           |                  |      |
|  | April 6 - 12    | 70.0                |                     |      |                                | 8.98                           |                  |      |
|  | January 12 - 18 | 87.0                |                     |      |                                | 8.90                           |                  |      |
| 2002   |                 |                     |                     |      |                                |                                |                  |      |
|  | October 6 - 12  | 62.0                |                     |      |                                | 8.69                           |                  |      |
|  | July 7 - 13     | 47.0                |                     |      |                                | 8.55                           |                  |      |

<sup>1/</sup> Benefits, such as housing and meals, are provided some workers but the values are not included in the wage rates.

**TABLE 2 -- Number of workers hired by farmers, wage rates, and hours worked,  
selected States, July 11 - 17, 2004, with comparisons <sup>1/</sup>**

| Item                                     | Florida | California | Texas &<br>Oklahoma | Arizona &<br>New Mexico | Hawaii        | United<br>States <sup>2/</sup> |
|--|---------|------------|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>Thousands</i>                         |         |            |                     |                         |               |                                |
| <b>ALL HIRED WORKERS</b>                 |         |            |                     |                         |               |                                |
| <b>July 11 - 17, 2004</b>                | 39      | 210        | 68                  | 24                      | 7             | 953                            |
| <b>April 11 - 17, 2004</b>               | 57      | * 234      | 46                  | 17                      | 7             | * 827                          |
| July 6 - 12, 2003                        | 45      | 225        | 61                  | 18                      | 7             | 943                            |
| <b>EXPECTED TO WORK</b>                  |         |            |                     |                         |               |                                |
| <b>150 days or more</b>                  |         |            |                     |                         |               |                                |
| <b>July 11 - 17, 2004</b>                | 33      | 167        | 48                  | 21                      | 6             | 637                            |
| <b>April 11 - 17, 2004</b>               | 53      | * 190      | 38                  | 16                      | 6             | * 651                          |
| July 6 - 12, 2003                        | 39      | 205        | 49                  | 16                      | 6             | 680                            |
| <b>149 days or less</b>                  |         |            |                     |                         |               |                                |
| <b>July 11 - 17, 2004</b>                | 6       | 43         | 20                  | 3                       | 1             | 316                            |
| <b>April 11 - 17, 2004</b>               | 4       | * 44       | 8                   | 1                       | 1             | * 176                          |
| July 6 - 12, 2003                        | 6       | 20         | 12                  | 2                       | 1             | 263                            |
| <i>Dollars per hour <sup>3/</sup></i>    |         |            |                     |                         |               |                                |
| <b>ALL HIRED WORKER WAGE RATE</b>        |         |            |                     |                         |               |                                |
| <b>July 11 - 17, 2004</b>                | 9.63    | 9.50       | 8.58                | 8.34                    | 11.46         | 9.10                           |
| <b>April 11 - 17, 2004</b>               | 8.79    | * 9.30     | 8.13                | 8.37                    | 11.26         | * 9.23                         |
| July 6 - 12, 2003                        | 9.55    | 9.22       | 8.15                | 8.07                    | 11.25         | 8.88                           |
| <b>WAGES BY TYPE OF WORKER</b>           |         |            |                     |                         |               |                                |
| <b>Field &amp; Livestock</b>             |         |            |                     |                         |               |                                |
| <b>July 11 - 17, 2004</b>                | 8.78    | 8.85       | 7.81                | 7.73                    | 9.90          | 8.50                           |
| <b>April 11 - 17, 2004</b>               | 7.94    | * 8.56     | 7.62                | 7.81                    | 9.66          | * 8.59                         |
| July 6 - 12, 2003                        | 8.51    | 8.55       | 7.60                | 7.55                    | 9.55          | 8.26                           |
| <b>Field</b>                             |         |            |                     |                         |               |                                |
| <b>July 11 - 17, 2004</b>                | 8.70    | 8.69       | 7.59                | 7.45                    | 9.77          | 8.42                           |
| <b>April 11 - 17, 2004</b>               | 7.85    | * 8.42     | 7.50                | 7.55                    | 9.51          | * 8.47                         |
| July 6 - 12, 2003                        | 8.55    | 8.43       | 7.62                | 7.11                    | 9.55          | 8.17                           |
| <b>Livestock</b>                         |         |            |                     |                         |               |                                |
| <b>July 11 - 17, 2004</b>                | 9.10    | 9.90       | 8.18                | 8.24                    | <sup>4/</sup> | 8.75                           |
| <b>April 11 - 17, 2004</b>               | 8.60    | * 9.83     | 7.93                | 8.20                    | <sup>4/</sup> | 8.95                           |
| July 6 - 12, 2003                        | 8.30    | 9.65       | 7.58                | 8.41                    | <sup>4/</sup> | 8.57                           |
| <i>Average hours per week</i>            |         |            |                     |                         |               |                                |
| <b>HOURS WORKED BY ALL HIRED WORKERS</b> |         |            |                     |                         |               |                                |
| <b>July 11 - 17, 2004</b>                | 39.2    | 45.6       | 37.8                | 45.0                    | 39.4          | 39.3                           |
| <b>April 11 - 17, 2004</b>               | 38.3    | * 45.9     | 41.0                | 45.7                    | 37.7          | * 40.6                         |
| July 6 - 12, 2003                        | 39.0    | 45.7       | 38.2                | 47.7                    | 36.7          | 39.8                           |

<sup>1/</sup> Excludes Agricultural Service workers.

<sup>2/</sup> United States excludes Alaska.

<sup>3/</sup> Value of any perquisites provided are not included in wage rates.

<sup>4/</sup> Insufficient data for this category; included in all hired wages.

\* Revised.

## RELIABILITY OF FARM LABOR ESTIMATES

**SURVEY PROCEDURES:** These data were collected by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) during the last two weeks of July using sampling procedures to ensure every employer of agricultural workers had a chance of being selected. Two samples of farm operators are selected. First, NASS maintains a list of farms that hire farm workers. Farms on this list are classified by size and type. Those expected to employ large numbers of workers are selected with greater frequency than those hiring few or no workers. A second sample consists of segments of land scientifically selected from an area sampling frame. Each June, highly trained interviewers locate each selected land segment and identify every farm operating land within the sample segment's boundaries. The names of farms found in these area segments are matched against the NASS list of farms; those not found on the list are included in the labor survey sample to represent all farms. This methodology is known as multiple frame sampling, with an area sample used to measure the incompleteness of the list. Additionally, a list of agricultural service firms was sampled in California and Florida. The survey reference week was July 11-17, 2004.

**RELIABILITY:** Two types of errors, sampling and non-sampling, are always present in an estimate based on a sample survey. Both types affect the "accuracy" of the estimates.

Sampling error occurs because a complete census is not taken. The sampling error measures the variation in estimates from the average of all possible samples. An estimate of 100 with a sampling error of 1 would mean that chances are 19 out of 20 that the estimates from all possible samples averaged together would be between 98 and 102; which is the survey estimate, plus or minus two times the sampling error. The sampling error expressed as a percent of the estimate is called the relative sampling error. The relative sampling error for number of hired workers at the U.S. level is normally less than 5 percent. The relative sampling error for the number of hired workers generally

ranged between 7 and 19 percent at the regional level. The U.S. all hired farm worker wage rate had a relative sampling error of 0.7 percent. The relative sampling error was 0.8 percent for the combined field and livestock worker wage rate. Relative sampling errors for the all hired farm worker wage rate generally ranged between 2 and 8 percent at the regional levels. Relative sampling errors for wage rates published by type of farm and economic class of farm generally ranged between 1 and 23 percent at the regional level.

Non-sampling errors can occur in a complete census as well as in sample surveys. They are caused by the inability to obtain correct information from each operation sampled, differences in interpreting questions or definitions, and mistakes in editing, coding or processing the data. Special efforts are taken at each step of the survey to minimize non-sampling errors.

**REVISION POLICY:** Farm labor information is subject to revision the next time the information is published or the year after the original publication date. The basis for revision must be supported by additional data that directly affect the level of the estimate. Worker numbers and wage rates for July 2003 and April 2004 were subject to revision with this report. If any revisions were made to previous data, they are reprinted in this report for your information, and they are identified as such.

**NEXT FARM LABOR PUBLICATION DATE:** The November 19th report will have information for the survey week of October 10-16, 2004. The report will include the number of All Hired Workers, Average Hours Worked by Hired Workers and the All Hired Worker Wage Rates at the Regional and U.S. levels. The wage rates for field, livestock, and combined field and livestock workers will also be available at the Regional and U.S. level. The number of Agricultural Service Workers and the corresponding wage rates will be published for California and Florida.